

Saint John The Baptist Catholic Church
The Grand Arch Mural

WHITING - CHURCHES

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Published on the occasion of the Church renovation
June 24, 2004

The Mural that graces the Grand Arch of the church traces the roots of the Catholic faith; first in the Slovak people in Europe and then to America and to the parishioners of Saint John the Baptist Parish.



The center and focus of the Mural is Jesus, the Lamb of God. The Lamb is shown as described in the Book of the Apocalypse with the seven seals, blood flowing from its side, surrounded with the bright rays of heavenly light. The Lamb, the source of life, is placed in the center of the Tree of Life. The tree's golden branches wind themselves around and in between the various scenes uniting the entire mural with their life-giving embrace. Beneath the Tree is the Fount of Grace, a spring representing the seven Sacraments whose flowing waters, like the branches, provide life-giving nourishment.

Saint John the Baptist

Standing at the right of the Tree of Life is Saint John the Baptist, the patron saint of our parish. He is robed in a purple cloak and crude under-garment of penance. As Saint John spent his life preparing the world for Jesus, so he now stands pointing to Jesus, the Lamb of God, the Savior of the world.



Saint Andrew

To the left of the Tree of Life is Saint Andrew, traditionally known as the apostle of the East and Patron of the Slovak peoples. At his side is the "X" shaped cross of his martyrdom, since known as the Saint Andrew's cross. Vested in green and white robes, with book in hand, Saint Andrew is honored as the first apostle for all Christians of the East.



Saint Methodius and Saint Cyril



To Saint Andrew's right and below him are two brothers, the two Apostles of the Slovak people of the ninth century, Saints Cyril and Methodius. About them are grouped the various peoples of Slavic origin to whom Saints Cyril and Methodius brought not only the Catholic faith, but also their own written language and culture. Saint Methodius is vested in the severe brown and white garb of the monk with cord cincture and a huge double barred cross. Though both were bishops, it is Cyril who is vested in the golden chasuble, white alb and the traditional headgear. To the rear stands a mountain fortress. Kneeling at the feet of the saints is a man whose name is Hlinka. He was a Slovak leader who lived in the 1940's. He represents the ancient spirit alive in the modern defenders of the faith and patriotism of the Slovak people.



The Mural is the result of much study and work of a Chicago artist, Ludwig Scheuerle. The mural was blessed and dedicated April 27, 1947, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Parish.

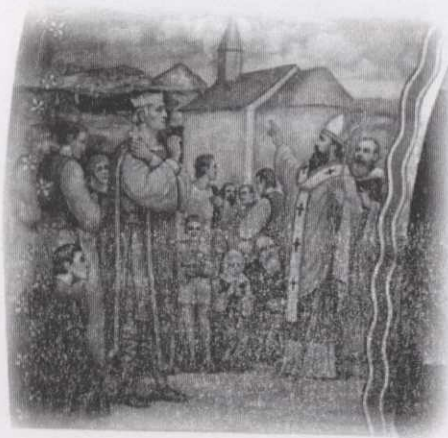
Below Saints Cyril and Methoduis is Saint Gaspar del Bufalo, apostle of the Precious Blood and founder of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Missionaries have ministered to the people of Saint John the Baptist parish when Father John Kostik, a member of the Community, became pastor of the parish in 1927. Saint Gaspar was an effective preacher of missions and retreats. He is pictured holding a huge mission

cross he took with him on all missions and retreats. He is pictured holding a huge mission cross he took with him on all missions and retreats. The figures surrounding Saint Gaspar represent some of the hardened sinners, outlaws and bandits whom he converted.

Saint Gasper



Prince Pribima



The last scene, to the left of the lamb depicts the Slovak prince Pribina and the Slovak people accepting the faith preached by Saint Cyril (in chasuble and traditional head gear). In the distance are the famous Tatra Mountains

Father Jaques Marquette



Looking back at the Tree of Life and to the right is the American scene. First is the patron of our parish, Saint John the Baptist, mentioned above. Next to him is the sainted Jesuit missionary and discoverer, Father Jacques Marquette whose travels brought him to our region on his historic mission to the Indians. In the background is the lake, which the French called Lake Illinois, now Lake Michigan.

Below Father Marquette is Father Francis Brunner, a member of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, who brought the Missionaries of the Precious Blood to the United States in 1844. Father Brunner is preaching to the residents of the Ohio farmlands. In the distance is a body of water and a steamboat, symbols of his epic journeys across the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of New Orleans, and up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers to Cincinnati, Ohio.

Father Francis Brunner



Father Furdek



Just below Father Brunner is Father Furdek, organizer of many Slovak societies and Fraternal Orders in the United States. He is presenting a charter of foundations to one of the parish's families.

The last scene to the right of the lamb pictures is Father Benedict Rajcany, the first pastor of Saint John parish. With the first Saint John Church in the background, he is looking out into the future at the growing success of the parish. To the rear is the industrial complex, previously called Standard Oil Company, now the British Petroleum Company.

Father Benedict Rajcany



About Father are parishioners of various ages representing the many who built and continue to make up the parish of Saint John the Baptist family.

Acknowledgements

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